

IN THE SPECIFICATION

Replace the previously presented text before the first line in its entirety with the following :

-- This is a continuation of application no. 09/403,741, having a § 371 date of February 29, 2000, now U.S. Patent No. 6,335,300 B1, which in turn claims the benefit of international application No. PCT/FR99/00467 filed on March 2, 1999 and published on September 10, 1999, which in turn claims the benefit of French application No. 98 02493, filed March 2, 1998.--

IN THE CLAIMS

Please cancel claims 17-21.

Remarks

Claims 1-15 are present in the application for the Examiner's review and consideration. Claims 17-21 have been canceled as drawn to a nonelected invention.

~~Applicants again note that an Information Disclosure Statement was~~ submitted on November 26, 2001. Applicants respectfully request that the references be made of record in this application, and that the Examiner complete and return an initialed Form PTO-1449. A courtesy copy of the Information Disclosure Statement and the date-stamped postcard evidencing the filing are attached as Exhibit A.

The Office Action stated that "[i]t should be noted applicants are not claiming benefit of the PCT application under 371 which also must be noted in the specification." Applicants believe this statement to be unclear, but to the extent the Examiner has not acknowledged the priority claims in the present application, Applicants respectfully disagree. The continuation application fee transmittal sheet submitted by Applicants on November 26, 2001 states:

Amend the specification by inserting before the first line the following sentence: This is a continuation of application no. 09/403,741, filed October 27, 1999.

Moreover, the copy of the Declaration from prior application no. 09/403,741, as again submitted by Applicants on November 26, 2001, states that the application "was filed as PCT international Application No. PCT/FR99/00467 on March 2, 1999." Thus, it is clear